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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
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Agenda item 8

DRAFT REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE FIRST PART OF ITS THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION

Draft report

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Addendum

COORDINATION QUESTIONS

A. Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and preparations for the Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination

1. At its 6th meeting on 18 May 1994, the Committee considered the overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) (E/1994/19) and the report of the Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC (E/1994/4).

Discussion

2. A number of delegations welcomed the emphasis placed by ACC in its work programme on major issues of international concern and on enhancing the effectiveness of its work and that of its subsidiary bodies. The continuing improvement in the content and format of the report was also welcomed by some members. Other members expressed the view that the ACC report should be structured in such a way that it would assist CPC in the fulfilment of its role of advising the Economic and Social Council on issues and problems relating to coordination within the United Nations system.

3. With respect to resource flows and financing for development, several members expressed concern that the flow of official development assistance (ODA), in particular to African and least developed countries, was either stagnant or decreasing. They further expressed their concern about the reduction of resources for operational activities, which had led, in particular, to a decline in the UNDP indicative planning figures for developing countries. A number of members emphasized the link between development and peace and stressed the need for balance in pursuit of those goals. Some members were of the view that, irrespective of the changing international environment, there was need to maintain the principles of international development cooperation that underlay ODA. One member stated that the ODA provided by major donors was not influenced by any political considerations. Some members expressed the view that it was the responsibility of ACC to ensure a better use of resources, by avoiding overlap and duplication among organizations, within the framework of zero growth budgetary policies.

4. Some delegations expressed the view that the statement contained in the first part of paragraph 6(d) of the ACC report was factually incorrect, whereas others agreed with the ideas contained therein.

5. Several members welcomed the information provided in the report on the actions taken by ACC and the Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development for the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. They emphasized that the momentum generated at Rio must be maintained. They expressed their concern at the lack of new and additional resources for carrying out the mandates emanating from Agenda 21 and expressed the hope that the Commission for Sustainable Development would address that question. Some members noted that the ACC report did not indicate how the actions reported represented a coordinated approach.

6. Some members expressed their concern that the discontinuation of the Advisory Committee for the Coordination of Information Systems might reduce the access of Member States to information and databases of the United Nations system and expressed their wish that the establishment of a new Information Systems Coordination Committee (ISCC) should lead to greater access to such information and databases. Some delegations emphasized the need for involving Member States in the work of ISCC through their permanent missions.

7. One member, referring to the information provided in the report on assistance to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations, stated that there was a large gap between the losses incurred by the affected countries as a result of abiding by the sanctions and the assistance being provided to them by the international community. The view was also expressed that ACC should devote greater attention to the problems of countries in transition.

8. Several members expressed their concern regarding the accumulation of arrears of assessed contributions and the consequent negative effects on programme delivery. A number of delegations welcomed the adoption by ACC of a set of common accounting standards for the United Nations system and expressed the hope that those standards would be implemented speedily by all organizations of the system.

9. Several members welcomed the emphasis placed in the ACC's work programme for 1994 on substantive economic and social issues, the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, human rights and African development.

10. A number of delegations welcomed the efforts of ACC to address key policy issues on the international agenda and to enhance the effectiveness of its functioning and the work of its subsidiary bodies, and encouraged it to continue to work towards a more coherent and effective utilization of the human and financial resources placed at the disposal of the system.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. The Committee took note of the reports of ACC and of the Chairmen of the Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC. It reaffirmed the importance of effective coordination within the United Nations system. It recognized that coordination should be based on substantive issues and stressed the need for enhanced coordination at the country level.

12. The Committee noted the suggestion by the Secretariat that the Committee's role in addressing the ACC report had been limited. In that connection, the Committee emphasized that a principal element of the mandate of CPC was the coordination issue.

13. The Committee requested information on the costs of the coordination activities of the United Nations system. The Committee was informed that such information was not available.

14. The Committee recommended that the Joint Meetings of ACC and CPC should continue to be held at the level of government representatives and heads of United Nations organs and agencies.

15. The Committee noted that the coordination activities of ACC should be directed at the avoidance of duplication and overlap. While that was an important function, the Committee recommended that ACC, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, should move beyond that stage to joint efforts, on the basis of the respective mandates and autonomy of the organizations, to work towards a more coherent and effective utilization of the human and financial resources placed at the disposal of the system.

16. The Committee welcomed the priority that the United Nations system was giving to the completion of the implementation of common accounting standards, and encouraged the Organization to complete the work, if possible, by the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

17. The Committee noted that the Economic and Social Council was now carrying out its coordination functions in the context of its high-level and coordination segments; considered that CPC could assist the Council in the fulfilment of the Council's role by focusing its attention on programming and prioritization of issues; and requested that future ACC reports be directed towards providing the necessary information to assist CPC in fulfilling that function.

18. The Committee agreed that the theme for the twenty-eighth series of joint meetings of CPC and ACC should be "African economic recovery and development".

B. Draft framework for a revised System-wide Plan for African Economic Recovery and Development

19. The issues discussed by the Committee included the purpose that a revision of the System-wide Plan would serve, the priority areas identified in the document, the resource requirements for the plan and specific modifications to the draft framework.

20. Some members emphasized that a revised plan would be useful if it could contribute to reversing the current adverse socio-economic trends in Africa and lead to concrete results. Others were of the view that the plan should serve to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of the assistance being provided by the organizations of the system to Africa. To that end, the plan should promote better coordination at the country level.

21. While most members agreed with the assessment of the current economic situation given in the draft, its general orientation and the broad priority areas identified in it, a number of delegations suggested that the problem of external debt, economic diversification and regional integration should be included among the priority issues to be addressed. Others suggested that market-based strategies, privatization and effective macroeconomic policies should also be highlighted.

22. A number of members stressed that additional resource allocations would be required to meet the socio-economic needs of the continent. Others were of the view that the economic crisis in Africa could be resolved only by the combined efforts of the African countries, the multilateral institutions of the United Nations system, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in promoting African development. Those delegations also emphasized the need for a more efficient use of resources.

23. Several members questioned the appropriateness of including in the draft a number of political considerations totally alien to the issue under consideration as contained in paragraph 38. A number of members also suggested that paragraph 20 should be reformulated to clarify the relationship between population and economic growth.

Conclusions and recommendations

24. The Committee took note of the general orientation of the draft framework, the broad priority areas identified in it and the decentralized process suggested for developing support programmes around the priority themes.

25. The Committee underscored the need for urgent and concerted action to address the grave economic situation in Africa. It noted that a well-conceived system-wide plan for African economic recovery and development could serve as a

useful instrument for promoting a concerted response by the United Nations system to the African crisis.

26. The Committee urged that the comments and suggestions made and the modifications proposed during the discussion should be fully taken into account in preparing the revised system-wide plan.